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APPENDIX ¹

OUR INDUSTRIAL VICTORY

SAMUEL M'CUNE LINDSAY

President of the Academy of Political Science and Professor of Social
Legislation in Columbia University

It was my privilege and duty yesterday afternoon to open the conference on Labor Reconstruction for the Academy with a few words of welcome. It is an unexpected pleasure and duty that the Committee has imposed upon me this evening to say a brief word of introduction at this closing session of the conference.

This is the Annual Dinner of the Academy of Political Science. It is the largest gathering of all the annual or semi-annual dinners in the thirty-eight years of the history of the Academy. The response to the program of this annual meeting for the two-day labor reconstruction conference has been a very gratifying one indeed. It is an evidence of a very widespread interest in the tremendous problems of readjustment that confront the country at this time. It is very appropriate that at this closing session the general topic of our discussion and thought should be: "Our Industrial Victory".

The characteristic American spirit will characterize the way we take the great victory that has been won for democracy and for the rights of the free peoples of the world. A large part of that victory has been an industrial victory brought about by the organization of the economic forces of the life of this nation in a way which made it a powerful factor in determining that great victory. A great deal will depend upon the spirit in which we take that victory. I hope for one that it will be with a very modest estimate of our achievement and a very lively appreciation of how far short we came of what we might have done had we not been caught unprepared for great social undertakings. If we take this great industrial victory in that spirit, assuring ourselves that it is nothing to what we are going to have in the industrial victory of the years to come, this war and all its victories, military and industrial, will indeed be a great blessing for this country.

There sits at the head of this table as the presiding officer of this session a great captain of finance, and at his right sits the greatest captain of industry in this country, the largest single employer of labor in this country, the man who by his genius has known how to organize men, to organize capital, and to get great results. I am sure there

¹ Introductory remarks of the President of the Academy at the closing session of the Labor Reconstruction Conference.

is not a man or woman in this audience to-night who does not feel a very real sense of appreciation for what Mr. Charles M. Schwab has done in this great national crisis. On the other side of the presiding officer sits the greatest leader of labor in this country, Mr. Samuel Gompers, a man who had already reached the years when he might well expect to lay down the heavier tasks of an active life, but who instead has girded himself for the fray, and just as he has led men in their aspirations and hopes for better working conditions during all these years, so he has given that same genius of leadership and organization to his country in her hour of need. I think we all feel a very deep sense of appreciation of what Mr. Gompers has done. My associations have not been very close with either Mr. Schwab or with Mr. Gompers, but I have a somewhat similar feeling of regard that amounts almost to affection for each of them. They seem to me to represent one and the same person in this great undertaking through which we have passed on the road to our industrial victory. They have been as one man during these recent months in leading and organizing and building up the great sources of economic strength in this country, and I cannot help but feel that in the years to come one great result of this industrial victory will be that men like Mr. Gompers and Mr. Schwab are going to go forward united as one man in the great task of rebuilding the economic life of the country.

I wish the Secretary of Labor were here this evening. We had a telegram from him a few hours ago saying that he has been detained in Washington and is unable to get here. I wish he could have said to you personally what I know he would say if he were here, but what would mean so much more if he were here in person to say it as the official representative of the labor interests of this country and as the head of the Department of Labor. The next three or four months are going to be very trying months. If we can get over them as we got over the first three or four months period of our unpreparedness for military operations, we will enter without any shadow of doubt perhaps the greatest period of industrial prosperity this country has ever known. But these next three or four months are going to be very difficult months to weather industrially. Capital must readjust its investments made for war purposes, and they must be transformed into investments in enterprises for peace purposes. Thousands and perhaps millions of men must be transferred from one type of industry to another, and the things found for them that they can do best. There is a new spirit of life and enthusiasm for work abroad in the land, and if we can only organize that,—and we can do it in the next three or four months if we follow precisely the same method that was followed in those three or four months, those anxious months when we were unprepared for war. What was the outstanding characteristic of that method? Why, it was the spirit of unselfish devo-

tion to the public interest that was manifest in every hamlet in every part of this land. Men with great business interests at stake thought nothing of throwing aside those interests, forsaking every selfish and personal advantage and offering themselves to the government. Labor was patient in the period of trial and stress. It also gave up many opportunities for selfish advantage and strenuously turned away from many things that it was accustomed to do, and tackled with great enthusiasm and perseverance the new tasks which it had to perform. Its attitude was, "Is there anything else that it is necessary for us to do?"

It seems to me that the next three or four months are months of trial and stress in which precisely those same tests must be met. If the wage-earner is willing to be patient in making the adjustment that it will be necessary for him to make, if capitalists and investors are willing to be patient in seeking to protect their legitimate interests, and take, perhaps, some chances, we can all work together to get over the next three or four months and share in this new period of industrial prosperity, when we shall begin to reap the full fruits of our industrial victory. The wave of thrift and economy that meant so much in the life of the nation during the past year can be utilized in investments in the legitimate course of business which will bring profit to the individual and yet maintain the new standards, the somewhat higher standards, of wages and working conditions which the wage-earner has won during the war. These can be maintained and perpetuated because of an increased efficiency of labor and an increased earning power of labor.

This seems to me to be the thought and dominating spirit of the government at Washington, and the dominating spirit of the leaders of industry and labor throughout the country. A great gathering somewhat similar to this has just come to a close at Atlantic City in the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, having in its membership the representative business men of the United States. We were told at the session of our conference this afternoon by a representative from that gathering that precisely that spirit was the spirit that dominated the Atlantic City conference. We shall hope in the course of the next few weeks to print the very valuable suggestions that have been made by many speakers who have taken part in this conference, and thus put in the hands of all the members of the Academy a volume that they can distribute and circulate among those who have to do officially and unofficially with the labor problem in all its varied aspects. Not the least valuable part of that volume as a helpful means of understanding representative sections of current public opinion will be the views on our industrial victory of such representative citizens as those from whom you are to hear this evening, Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip, Mr. Charles M. Schwab, Mr. Samuel Gompers, and Mr. William Howard Taft.